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narrative as the raising of Lazarus completely unhistorical. That is not the equivalent of saying that it is actual falsehood; rather it is the deliberate construction of a narrative as a pictorial embodiment of spiritual truth, "and one may admit a large amount of such deliberate construction" without invalidating the traditional view of the authorship. To this strenuous objection will be made. The ready admission of unhistorical elements in the gospel will seem to many the weakness of this book; nevertheless, as a whole, it is a real, significant contribution toward the understanding and solution of the Johannine problem.

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The Ethical Teaching of Jesus. BY CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS, D.D. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904. Pp. xi + 293. \$1.50, *net*.

It is a long road from the Professor Briggs whom I knew as a literal exegete and defender of traditional positions when I was a student at Union Seminary twenty-five years ago, to the author of this, the thirteenth volume from his prolific pen. Some of his writings have borne within them the marks of the transition. Sometimes they have almost reminded one of the southern heretic who believed on scientific grounds in the evolution of Adam, and on biblical grounds in the special creation of Eve. In this last volume he has almost, if not quite, reached the *terra firma* of a consistently and comprehensively tenable critical position. The only traces of the earlier positions are in such rare instances of special pleading as that, e. g., in which he defends Jesus' destruction of the herd of swine by saying: "If Jesus is the Messiah, endowed with divine authority on earth, we cannot refuse him the divine right to deprive men of their property. It is probable that these owners were unusually unworthy of his regard and were unusually deserving of deprivation of something they were misusing or abusing." In a similar relapse into doubtful apologetics he justifies the cursing of the fig tree: "He was now justified in putting forth his authority in an executive way in the condemnation and cursing of this ill-deserving tree, and of depriving its owner of property which probably he had not properly cultivated." These, and the too frequent use of the words "probable" and "probably," with the tendency to pass easily from fact to imagination, which the free use of these terms implies, are the only traces of the former dogmatic exegete which we find in this work of the broad critical scholar.

This book is an attempt to reconstruct what Jesus actually said by putting together what the evangelists, in their translation of Hebrew into

Greek, and Hebrew forms of teaching into forms better adapted to the Greek and Roman world, represent him as saying, and the form in which we know his original teaching was cast.

This original teaching was in four forms: (1) the parables, in dealing with which "we must translate the parabolic form into the forms of western and modern thought in order to understand the substance of the teaching;" (2) *halacha*—exposition and application of the law, discussions in which "Jesus employed the method of reasoning of the rabbis of his time, and these methods must be considered with all their faults, if we are to get a true understanding of his teaching;" (3) prophecy, which is proverbially in need of expert interpretation; and (4) *haggada*, "the more popular method, embracing the illustrative teaching of historic fiction as well as stories of the imagination, both in a prose form; and similes, allegories, enigmas, and shrewd sayings, in the poetic forms of Hebrew Wisdom." "The greater part of the teaching of Jesus, as it appears in Matthew and Luke, is in the gnomic form of Hebrew Wisdom, for the most part derived from the *Logia* of Matthew. All of these came from a Hebrew original, arranged in the parallelisms of Hebrew poetry. All of the gospels disregard more or less the poetic structure. The *logia* are sometimes condensed, sometimes enlarged by explanatory statements; but it is quite easy to find their original form, and so get the very words of Jesus in the form in which he uttered them." (What an effective antitoxin all this is, by the way, to the mental disease known as the doctrine of verbal inspiration!) Bold and interesting as this method of reconstruction is, it is a relief to find that nothing valuable is either added to or taken from the substance of the teaching of Jesus by its application. It is simply a promising and harmless exegetical experiment; and while its results have a high degree of probability, they can never give us absolute certainty, or much affect one way or the other the gospel message.

The more practical value of the book lies in its attempt to present in order the substance of the teaching of Jesus under such heads as "The Will of the Father," "The Word of Jesus," "The Kingdom of God," "Repentance and Faith," "The Two Ways," "Godlike Love," "Christlike Love," "Casuistry," "The Law," "Righteousness," "Pharisaism," "Sin and Judgment," "Service and Reward," "Counting the Cost," "Counsels of Perfection," "The Church and Society." Whoever has found difficulty in reconciling and interpreting the hard sayings of Jesus will find considerable light shed on them by the method of this book, which is that the lower law must give way to the higher, and that "over and above and beyond all laws and commands is the liberty of Christian

love, in the following of Christ; that in this Christian perfection consists." Precepts enjoined on those who enter into the highest service of God, and into the fulness of this liberty of love, become absurd and even mischievous when interpreted as rigid laws to be enforced on the hard hearts of the multitude by ecclesiastical or civil authority. Likewise the promises of all things needful, and the exhortations to be anxious for nothing material, apply only to those who are earnestly anxious for the spiritual gifts, and eagerly devoted to the spiritual service of the kingdom of God; and are by no means to be regarded as encouragements to promiscuous shiftlessness and improvidence. The ecclesiastics who quote the incidental remarks drawn from Jesus in his debates with the Pharisees and Sadducees as the last word on the delicate subject of divorce may well ponder such statements as these: "We may say in general that Jesus leaves out of consideration the ethics of the family, as they are presented in the Old Testament law. He does not oppose them; he does not endorse them; he does not change them. He made love the dominant force in the family as in all other relations." "He taught no civil laws. He did not endorse those of his time. He did not oppose them. The principle of Christlike love was destined to work transformation in all spheres, working gradually as leaven, as salt, as light."

The only noticeable inconsistency with the supremacy of this principle of love is where, in the chapter on "Service and Reward," Dr. Briggs attempts to revive the notion of "works of supererogation, and the acquirement of merit in heaven with God." If he had at this point tested his conception of the liberty of Godlike love by its human counterpart in the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, he would have detected its utter incongruity with this "doctrine of works of supererogation whose merit is stored up with God for the doer of them until the day of judgment." But this, like the apology for the destruction of the swine and the fig tree, is left over from the professor of a generation ago. These are almost the only flies in this very precious ointment. The great, positive position of the book commands the admiration of us all: "I am fully convinced that Jesus' principle of voluntary love is the great transforming principle of Christianity, the material principle of sanctification, and the principle specially adapted to this modern ethical period of the world. When it once lays hold of Christian people, as it surely will ere long, the Christian church will enter into a new and more fruitful age."

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